United Nations A/71/979–S/2017/601

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
12 July 2017

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventy-first session
Agenda item 31
Prevention of armed conflict

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Letter dated 6 July 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon the instructions of my Government, I am transmitting to your attention the statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic on the provocation of the Azerbaijani side along the line of contact between Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan on 4 July 2017 (see annex).

Following the armed aggression launched by Azerbaijan in April 2016, which claimed numerous lives, including among the civilian population of Nagorno-Karabakh, two meetings were held between the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan, in Vienna on 16 May 2016 and in Saint Petersburg on 20 June 2016, under the auspices of the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). To reduce the risk of further violence, it was agreed to finalize in the shortest possible time an OSCE investigative mechanism for ceasefire violations, to expand the existing Office of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and to increase the number of international observers.

By consistently rejecting the creation of an investigative mechanism for ceasefire violations and the deployment of an increased number of international observers on the line of contact, Azerbaijan unequivocally reveals its failure and lack of interest in the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In their statement of 18 May 2017, for example, the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group were explicit in identifying Azerbaijan as the party initiating the ceasefire violations.

As long as Azerbaijan rejects the implementation of the agreements reached in Vienna and Saint Petersburg and fails to adhere to its international commitments under the 1994 and 1995 trilateral ceasefire agreements between Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia, the leadership of Azerbaijan bears full responsibility for all the human casualties, regardless of their nationality. Armenia grieves the loss of all lives and urges Azerbaijan to immediately halt its continuing ceasefire violations and provocations and to adhere strictly and without further delay to its commitments to strengthen the ceasefire regime and to create an atmosphere conducive for moving the peace process forward.

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I kindly request that the present letter and its annex be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 31, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Zohrab **Mnatsakanyan**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex to the letter dated 6 July 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement by the Information and Public Relations Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Artsakh

5 July 2017

In the evening of 4 July 2017, the Azerbaijani side committed yet another provocation, firing at the territory of the Republic of Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh Republic). For the first time since the aggression in April 2016, the armed forces of Azerbaijan employed a TR-107 multiple rocket launcher system. The fire was launched from the positions located in close proximity to residential buildings in the village of Alkhanlu.

The Defence Army of Artsakh was forced to take countermeasures to suppress the fire activity of the Azerbaijani army. The incident provoked by the Azerbaijani side, unfortunately, led to casualties among the villagers.

Since the aggression in April 2016 up to now, we have repeatedly drawn attention to the fact that the Azerbaijani side, in violation of all the norms of international humanitarian law, does not disdain to use its civilian population as a human shield for shelling the territory of Artsakh.

The peaceful population on both sides of the border has long become a hostage to the Azerbaijani authorities' policy of constant escalation of tensions on the line of contact between the armed forces of Artsakh and Azerbaijan and of sabotaging the efforts of the mediators to restore the negotiation process.

The incident once again confirms the importance of the agreements reached at the summits of 16 May 2016 in Vienna and of 20 June 2016 in Saint Petersburg, aimed at the stabilization of the situation on the line of contact. The immediate implementation of these agreements, torpedoed by Azerbaijan, will allow for the prevention of the recurrence of such incidents in the future.